(b) if so, why the pay-scale of Area Managers of Regional Rural Banks have not been settled even after two years; and

(c) by when the pay scales are likely to be decided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) to (c) The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) after consultation with the Government issued instructions in December, 1984 prescribing *inter-alia* the norms for the creation of posts of Area/Senior Managers in the Regional Rural Banks. These managers were allowed to draw a special pay of Rs. 75/- p.m. in addition to the grade pay of the officer concerned. It has now been decided to pay a special pay at the rate of 10 per cent of the basic pay of the incumbents to the post of Area/Senior Managers with effect from 1st January, 1987. Necessary instructions have also been issued in this behalf by NABARD.

Merger of Regional Rural Banks with Commercial Banks

1924. SHRI NARAYAN KAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state whether Government propose to merge Regional Rural Banks with Commercial Banks and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): No, Sir. Government are of the view that Regional Rural Banks should continue to function as separate entities for catering to the credit requirements of small borrowers.

Armed Guards to vulnerable branches of Regional Rural Banks

1925. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have advised the Regional Rural Banks to identify vulnerable branches and arrange for arm-guards at the cost of Sponsoring Bank; and

(b) if so, how many pockets (Regional Rural Banks-wise) have so far been identified and at how many pockets such arm-guards have been placed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) The Regional Rural Banks were advised by the Government in July, 1985 to identify branches located in high risk and disturbance prone pockets in consultation with concerned Sponsor Banks and request the State Governments for providing necessary security arrangements. The State Governments in their capacity of share holders in the equity of RRBs are expected to render this service free of cost in case where any State Government insists on levying of charges for services rendered, the Sponsor Banks should bear the same.

(b) The present data reporting system does not generate the information sought for. Moreover, the time and energy likely to be spent in collecting such information may not be commensurate with the objective to be achieved.

Special increment for not joining strike to employees of Fatehpur Kshetriya Gramin Bank

1926. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that management of Fatehpur Kshetriya Gramin Bank allowed special increment to those who did not join the strike at the call given by All India Rural Bank Employees Association recently;

(b) whether there is any such provision in service rules; and

(c) whether Government do not consider it an unfair labour practice?